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**ACADIANA LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

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**ACADIANA DELEGATION ANNOUNCES
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2008 REGULAR SESSION**

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA—The Acadiana Delegation announces highlights from the 2008 Regular Session.

The Delegation has worked as a collective, cohesive voice for the Acadiana region during the 2008 legislative sessions in an effort to best advance the needs and priorities of this region.

The efforts of Delegation members, through regionalized coalitions, have paid dividends for constituents back home in the form of lower tax burdens for working families, bolstering the state's education systems and securing financial resources to ensure the fruition of economic development projects within the Acadiana region.

Representative Jonathan Perry (Kaplan) commented, "As chair of the Acadiana Delegation, I am very excited and proud of the legislation which the members of the Delegation put forth during this session and the previous session. It has been a long and trying six months; however, ethics reforms, business tax relief and the repeal of Stelly are wonderful accomplishments for this group of legislators and the Legislature."

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Attachment

Acadiana Delegation Legislative Highlights

Below are some of the highlights from the recently completed 2008 Regular Session:

- Act167 – extends the office hours of the registrar of voters during the early voting period by requiring the office of the registrar to stay open until 6:00 p.m. rather than 4:30 p.m.
- Act264 - provides that no owner or manager of a restaurant which sells imported crawfish or shrimp shall misrepresent to the public, either verbally, on a menu, or on signs displayed on the premises, that the crawfish or shrimp is domestic.
- HB1 - supported a \$1,000, one-time salary supplement for all school support personnel and nonpublic lunchroom employees and supported a certified teachers' pay raise of \$1,019 (average) to keep pay in line with the Southern Regional Average and provided \$90 million in new funding through the Minimum Foundation Formula (MFP) to the sixty-nine public schools districts and the Recovery School District.
- HB420 (Constitutional Amendment) – proposes that 1/5 of the severance tax on all natural resources other than sulphur, lignite or timber shall be remitted to the parish in which severance or production occurs and proposes increasing the severance tax collection cap from \$850,000 to \$1,850,000, effective July 1, 2009, and then to \$2,850,000, effective July 1, 2010. Fifty percent of the excess severance tax revenues received by a parish shall be used towards the Parish Transportation Fund.
- HB958 - unanimously supported requiring health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders in individuals under 17 years of age.
- HB1150 - overhauls the Louisiana Department of Labor in favor of coordinating workforce training programs under the umbrella of the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Such programs would be responsible for aligning technically-skilled labor with industry needs and over 100,000 skilled-labor job vacancies in our region and across the state.
- HB1232 – provides for the postponement of payment of ad valorem taxes upon declaration of an emergency by the governor or a parish president pursuant to the La. Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act and only in cases of disaster caused by overflow, general conflagration, general crop destruction or other public calamity.
- HB1270 - proposed and authored legislation creating the Advanced Biofuel Industry Development Initiative to reduce domestic dependency on foreign oil production, while fostering economic development opportunities using readily available feed resources.
- HCR231 - encourages and supports the bid to hold the Congres Mondial Acadien 2014 in Louisiana, encourages all local and regional officials to participate in this celebration.
- SB26 – provides for a \$75 per month supplemental pay increase for eligible law enforcement officers and firefighters beginning in July, 2009.
- SB286 - provides for phased in universal access to the LA 4 Early Childhood Program and for participation by non-school system providers of early childhood education.

Two bills with favorable tax implications for Acadiana residents:

- SB87 – Provides for the repeal of the Stelly Income Tax, thus cutting over \$300 million in personal income taxes and giving working families the largest tax cut in the state's history.
- SB520 - Prohibits an action to collect a tax applicable to movables on certain purchases of certain manufactured homes between 9/1/05 and 12/31/06 used as residences in certain parishes which were impacted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, if the basis of such action is the date upon which a declaration of immovability is recorded in the conveyance or mortgage records. (7/1/08)

Several appropriations were made with direct impact on Acadiana:

- HB2 – provides \$23.9 million payable from general obligation bonds for the Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico Flood Control feasibility study, planning, design, right of way and construction of levees, floodgates and other flood control systems (Ascension, Assumption, Iberia, Iberville, Lafourche, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne and West Baton Rouge Parishes).
- HB2 – provides \$17.8 million payable from general obligation bonds for dock improvements, office space and house project planning and construction (Calcasieu, Iberia, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, Terrebonne and West Baton Rouge Parishes).
- HB2 – provides \$2.5 million payable from general obligation bonds for the planning and construction of Louisiana State Arboretum in Evangeline Parish.
- HB2 – provides \$13 million payable from general obligation bonds for protections and enhancements to the Atchafalaya Basin (Assumption, Avoyelles, Iberia, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Landry and St. Mary Parishes).
- HB2 – provides \$15.5 million payable from general obligation bonds to the Acadiana Gulf of Mexico Access Channel, Port of Iberia for the planning, constructions, right of way, relocations and utilities.
- HB2 – provides \$1.7 million payable from general obligation bonds for planning and reconstruction of the Mermentau River Harbor Terminal District's Access Road (Acadia Parish).
- HB2 – provides \$45,000 thousand payable from general obligation bonds to Dementia Management Wandering System, Department of Veterans Affairs (Jefferson Davis Parish).
- HB2 – provides \$1.8 million payable from general obligation bonds for bulk heading and dredging at Port Vermillion.
- HB2 – provides \$5 million payable from general obligation bonds to Cameron Parish for Holly Beach sewer planning and construction.
- HB2 – provides roughly \$28.5 million payable from general obligation bonds for I-49 from Lafayette to the Westbank Expressway for construction, right of ways and utilities (Lafayette, Lafourche, Iberia, St. Charles, St. Martin, St. Mary and Terrebonne Parishes).